

A Conversation with an Atheist!



Translated and
adapted from the
book of Maqalat
(Essays) by Sheikh
Muhammad
Al-Ghazali

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Introduction

In an attempt to make use of Muslim scholarship in the field of Da`wah, the E-Da`wah Committee (EDC) presents in this ebook a conversation that took place between the prominent Muslim scholar Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali and an atheist. The purpose is to tackle the main misconceptions that atheists have about the issue of the existence of God, who created God, the origin of creation, and why there are many atrocities and pains.

At the end the EDC calls on all atheists to reflect on the answers given by Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazali to find the truth about God and the creation. Finally, EDC calls on any atheist to watch a video about the creation of the universe from an Islamic perspective. All atheists are invited to visit the Truth Seeker website to find their way to God..



Here is the text of the conversation:

I have lengthily debated with an atheist where I showed great patience and self-constraint in order to give myself a chance to stand on all his allegations and thus be able to refute them all using clear evidence and strong argument.



He (i.e. my atheist friend) said: If Allah created the universe, then who created Allah?

I replied: With such a question, or more likely, objection, you emphasize that everything must have a creator!

He said: *Don't take me through mazes; just answer the question!*

I said: You do believe that the universe was created without a creator; i.e. it







did not need to have a creator. Then, why do you accept the argument that the universe existed on its own and at the same time find it strange when the people of faith say that Allah, the One Who created the universe, has no beginning?! It is one and the same question... why do you believe yourself when you say it while belying others when they believe stick thereto?! Moreover, if you think a creator who has no creator of himself is a myth, then, a universe without a creator is a myth too according to your own logic!

He said: *We live in this world and feel its existence and thus cannot deny it!*

I said: Who asked you to deny the existence of this world? When we take a taxi or boat or an airplane on a certain route, we do not question the existence of the car for example, rather, we might ask: does it run by itself or there is a skillful driver behind the wheel?! Hence, coming back to your question I may say: your question is self-refuted. You and I admit an actual existence, no one can deny this. You claim that it has no beginning in relation to the matter, while I do believe that it has no beginning in relation to the creator. So, if you want to ridicule an existence with no beginning, you should ridicule yourself before ridiculing the people of faith!

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which we can examine and decide; with these brains we can research, conclude, discuss and believe. With these brains we can also reject blind imitation as well as void arguments. If people mock at the radicals who are enslaved by the past and make fun of their mental narrow-mindedness, they should also mock at those who deaden reason in the name of reason and tread on scientific logic in the name of science. Unfortunately, those are the majority of atheists!

Verily, we – Muslims – build our faith in Allah as based on mental wakefulness and we read the signs of higher existence through the human thought's travel throughout the whole universe.

In a single page of the Qur'an I found reference to the function of reason in three consecutive ascending forms. This surah is Az-Zumar (Surah No. 39 of the Qur'an). The first form that one can notice is praising knowledge and dispraising ignorance...



“Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed.” (Az-Zumar 39:9)



Then comes the second form to show that a true Muslim is not enslaved by a single fixed idea or habit; rather, he is a human being who weighs everything and chooses what is more authentic and righteous...

“Therefore, give good tidings (O Muhammad) to my bondmen. Who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allah guideth, and such are men of understanding.” (Az-Zumar 39:17-18)

Then the “men of understanding” are mentioned for the third time in the same context as they are those who look into Allah’s creation and who study the story of life in all fields and aspects in order to turn their minds afterwards from the creatures to the creator...



“Hast thou not seen how Allah hath sent down water from the sky and hath caused it to penetrate the earth as water springs, and afterward thereby produceth crops of divers

hues; and afterward they wither and thou seest them turn yellow; then He maketh them chaff. Lo! Herein verily is a reminder for men of understanding.” (Az-Zumar 39:21)

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find the answer to the question: Does God Exist?**







It is apparent from the above three forms in that page of the Qur'an that faith is unconnected with blind imitation, shortsighted look and/or idle thinking. Instead, it appreciates the Creator's innovation in plants, flowers, fruits and various colors and forms of creation that eventually turn into clothes and food for man and animals, then, they become ruins and then they reemerge again in the form of colorful plants and tasteful foods!

Who did create all these?

My atheist friend – as if he was intoxicated – said: It is earth that created all these.

I said: Is it earth that ordered the clouds to move in the sky, the sun to shine, the tree leaves to store carbon and produce oxygen, and the seeds or grains to be abundant in fat, sugar, fragrance and starch?!

He said: *I mean nature in both the earth and heaven!*

I said: Both the earth and heaven and what is between them cooperated in producing each grain of the rice dish you may have for lunch or dinner. What is the exact role of each one of them in this process of creation? Furthermore, who is responsible for giving apples their sweet taste and pepper their hot taste? Is it the dust of the earth or the water coming down from heaven?!





He said: *I do not know and there is no avail behind this kind of knowledge.*

I said: Do not you realize that this needs an administrative and controlling mind and a categorizing will?! Where do you think is the mind that created and the will that diversified all these?! Can they be found in piles of fertilizers or beams of rays?!

He said: *The universe was found and developed according to evolution and we know neither the origin nor the details thereof.*

I said: Let me explain what you are saying. You claim that in former times there were a group of blind elements who travel through the vacant space then after a long time and through concurrence there appeared a unique chance that would not come again for good and only then a living cell was found in its primitive form then it started to multiply and grow until it reached what we see now!



This is the ignorance you call science and you find no shame in defying the whole world therewith. There were sophisticated calculations and you just say that they were solved spontaneously; minute and tiny magnificent creatures were found and you claim that they were given life by chance and that chance will never come back again! All this is nothing but a way to evade trusting and putting faith in Allah the Almighty!

Just point your phone at the QR code to watch a video on the Creation of Universe.







He (i.e., my atheist friend) angrily said: *Were there a god as you say, would the world have all these atrocities and pains? Would one find idiots having fun and luxury while the smart ones having strict life conditions? Would one find healthy children die while disfigured and deformed persons live dissatisfied? Etc.*

I said: I was right to think that your atheism can be traced back to more psychological and social problems than to logical or rational ones. History witnesses to the fact that through ages there were people who believed and/or disbelieved according to what may befall them be it hardship or ease.

“And among mankind is he who worships Allah upon a narrow marge so that if good befalls him he is content therewith, but if a trial befalls him, he falls away utterly. He loses both the world and the Hereafter. That is the sheer loss.” (Al-Hajj 22:11)



He said: *We are not selfish as you claim as we do not get satisfied or dissatisfied based on our liking only. It is just that we consider the conditions of human beings and then pass the judgment which you object to.*



I said: Your problem is that you do not really realize the nature of life and the function of human beings therein that it is a temporary pathway to an everlasting resort. For a human being to succeed in passing this pathway to meet his end he must be afflicted with what may refine his soul and polish his nature. This affliction is of diverse types. When the believers succeed in overcoming all the obstacles on their way and they keep a good relationship with Allah that can be affected by neither good or evil they eventually return to Allah following this hard journey who addresses them as saying:



“O My slaves! For you there is no fear this day, nor is it ye who grieve.” (Az-Zukhruf 43:68)

He said: *Why is this affliction necessary?*

I said: An individual may spend the night in acquiring knowledge, break into sweat to enjoy some rest, and go through great experiences and experiments in life in order to get a high position or the like; if this is the common law in this short life of ours on earth, it is then very logical and normal to be the right way towards anticipated immortality!







He mockingly said: *Is this your philosophy in justifying the atrocities inflicting people and make them forbearing?!*

I said: I will teach you in detail the truth about the evils you complain about. These evils are of two types. One type is related to Allah's Destiny for this present life without which life cannot go on and man's mission cannot be completed. Similarly, the late Mahmoud `Abbas Al-`Aqqad (a prominent Muslim scholar and writer) said:

There is some sort of integrity between all ingredients of existence... there is no meaning of courage without danger, nor of generosity without need, nor of perseverance without hardship, nor of virtue without a counterpart shortcoming or defect. Similarly, this is true with our sensational pleasures as it is true with our psychological virtues and mental needs.



We do not find the pleasure of satiation without knowing the pain of hunger, nor we find quenching without suffering from thirst, nor do we appreciate a good view without realizing that it is our nature to be disturbed by an ugly looking view.



This interpretation of the nature of life can be joined with the belief that Allah, the Almighty, tests every individual with what fits his own nature, soul and environment most. There are great differences between an individual and another as all know. You may find someone who screams due to something that another deems insignificant and so on and so forth; it is a fact that God has other schemes. What is important is that the events in the private lives of people as well as the life in general are guided by a comprehensive frame of unquestionable divine justice. However, this justice, as described by Al-`Aqqad:



“...cannot be realized through looking into one case only. It is mandatory to generalize and to be aware of many cases before comprehending the facets of justice of the divine will. A black spot in a beautiful painting may appear to be an ugly stain if the whole painting is hid and the spot is seen in isolation. However, this black spot may – if we look at the whole picture – be one of its aspects of beauty that cannot be overlooked

or that may add to the beauty of the painting and without which the painting would look defected. Similarly, we may cry out in grief over an accident that may befall us, then we start laughing or rejoicing after realizing what we might have benefited from that very accident.”







That is the right look towards the unwilled hardships people may be afflicted with in this present life.

As for the second type of evils that you may complain about my dear friend, this can be traced back to your own fault and the fault of similar straying people (from the right path).

He denounced as saying: *Neither I nor the like of me has anything to do with the chaos prevailing the world! How dare you accuse us of this?!*

I said: Verily, you are responsible for this. Allah (glory be to Him) designed a wonderful system for this universe that guarantees its happiness as He ordered the strong to help the weak, the rich to be good to the poor and He warned against following one's whims and doing injustices and transgression and ordained that who observes all these will be rewarded in both this present life and the Hereafter...



**“Whosoever doeth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.”
(An-Nahl 16:97)**



When people sever that which Allah ordered to be joined and help one another unto transgression instead of helping one another unto righteousness, how could they complain their Creator if they reaped what they have already sown?! Truly, most of the evils the world is witnessing stem from going astray from the right path as clarified by Allah the Almighty:

“Whatever of misfortune strikes you, it is what your right hands have earned. And He forgives much.”(Ash-Shura 42:30)

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him), the Second Caliph, dispatched an army to fight those who refrained from paying the due Zakah. By doing this, he acknowledged rights, fought against selfishness and carried out what is ordained by Islam as a religion. If it happened that someone succeeded him but did not follow his suit, critics should have blamed the successor and not fate that filled life with atrocities!

He said: *What do you mean?*

I said: The legislations set by Allah, the Almighty, are sufficient to make life easy for everyone. However, instead of blaming those who disable them you dare to blame Allah the Creator and accuse His religion and Deeds!



It is ignoble that some people may curse heaven when the earth goes bad. Instead of doing what is incumbent upon one as to set right the chaos and correct what went wrong, one starts to unjustly babble with many words accusing Allah and religion!

You, materialists, are sick and your consciences and minds need to be cured and remedied!

After this serious dialogue, I went back to myself as asking: Diseases are on the verge of turning into pandemic. Therefore, do we have those who can address wounds and treat ailments, or, the crisis with the Muslim callers will still be there?!





Why Islam?

If you agree with the basic concepts in this conversation, you may still ask why Islam stands out from other religions. The reason is simply that Islam is the final and complete way of life that God revealed to guide humanity. Previous divine messages (such as the ones taught by Abraham, Moses and Jesus) have been lost or altered throughout time. God chose to send Muhammad (peace be upon him) to deliver His final message, which maintains the core teachings of all the previous revelations. The book sent to Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the Qur'an, which was revealed as guidance for all of humanity. Just like the Torah sent to Moses and the Gospel sent to Jesus, the Qur'an is a guidebook teaching us how to worship God in the purest manner and thereby achieve our purpose in life. The Qur'an is unique because it has remained preserved in its exact and original form for more than 1,400 years.

Islam is not a new way of life; rather, it is the final message, which upholds the same essential beliefs that God sent to humanity through all of His messengers. Through this message, God calls on each individual to lead a conscientious life by drawing close to Him and to remain cognizant of their final accountability in front of the one and only God.

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watch a video on the Purpose of Life.**

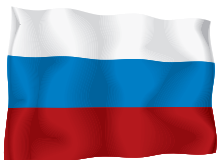




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